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硕士学位论文

Aspects of Chinese Diplomatic Interpreting

中国外交口译面面观

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Synopsis

The current thesis is an attempt to present a panoramic picture of the Chinese diplomatic interpreting (CDI), its history, unique features, special role of the interpreters, difficulties, strategies and the training.

The paper comprises of five chapters in addition to Introduction and Conclusion. In the introduction, the author takes a look at what research has been done so far in this regard, and specifies how the current research distinguishes itself from the previous ones. Chapter one is a review of the history of DI in the world and the features of DI in terms of the language, content and role of interpreters. Chapter two presents a picture of CDI and its unique characteristics. Chapter three focuses on the diplomatic interpreters in China, who they are, what their social status is, and what specific problems they face during interpreting. Chapter four proposes strategies for the specific problems Chinese diplomatic interpreters encounter. In this chapter, the author argues for the idea of literal interpreting as the guiding principle for the sake of cultural diplomacy, coupled with some other flexible strategies to guarantee effective understanding on the parts of the listeners. The author backs the proposed strategy with the *skopostheorie*. Chapter five answers the question of how to become a diplomatic interpreter in China, focusing on institutional training and self-training. Chapter five also talks about how to prepare for an interpreting assignment before and during the interpreting.

This paper touches upon the major aspects of Chinese diplomatic interpreting. What merits special attention is that, given the importance of cultural diplomacy, the author argues for the need to increase the output of Chinese culture through literal interpreting.

Keywords: Chinese diplomatic interpreting, features, diplomatic interpreters, training

摘 要

本文旨在向读者展示一幅完整的中国外交口译画面，包括历史，特征，中国外交口译员的角色以及面临的种种困难，口译策略以及译员培训。

本文在开篇介绍与结论外共分五章。在引言中，作者回顾了关于外交口译上已有的研究，并指出本论文的特别之处。第一章回顾了外交口译的历史，语言及内容上的特征，以及外交译员所扮演的角色。第二章详谈了中国外交口译及其特点。第三章讨论了中国外交口译员的方方面面，诸如从业背景，社会地位，实际工作中的困难等等。第四章具体讨论中国外交口译在实际口译中应对各种困难时应当采取何种策略，作者提出中国外交口译为了文化外交应该以直译为主，并以其为辅以保证交流通畅，作者以目的论作为该策略的支撑理论。第五章着重谈当前中国外交译员的培训，包括机构培训和自我培训。本章同时讨论了译员如何在译前以及口译过程中做充分准备。

本文讨论了中国外交口译诸多主要方面。其中尤其值得注意的是，鉴于文化外交的重要性，作者提出中国外交口译应多采用直译策略以增加文化输出。

关键词：中国外交口译，特征，外交译员，培训

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Introduction

There are several questions I'd like to answer before elaborating on the details of my paper.

1. Why do I choose to talk about DI? And why is China?

As one of the top priorities of the government work, diplomacy is closely related to the dignity and interests of a country and it influences many aspects such as political life and economic construction inside a country. It can be safely said that diplomacy plays an irreplaceable role in a nation.

It goes without saying that we need a medium to accommodate exchanges and cooperation among different countries and regions where different cultures, values, national situations and diplomacies co-exist. The most important and irreplaceable medium is interpreting, without which most communication could not go along, let alone diplomacy.

DI focuses mainly on foreign affairs where diplomacy is at the core, facilitating communications between different countries with different languages.

Although its importance is known to all, DI is not much discussed either at home or abroad, at least not explicitly written. For example, there are not as many publications on DI as those on other issues of interpreting like interpreting processes, interpreting quality assessment, interpreting strategies, history of interpreting, or training of interpreters. According to the survey in the appendix of *Interpreting Theories and Teaching* written by Liu Heping (2005), among the papers and books published at home and abroad, 29 are about interpreting processes, 34 about quantitative analysis or quality assessment, 36 about problems or errors in interpreting and the corresponding measures, 30 about interpreting strategies, skills and analysis, 5 about the different forms of interpreting, 4 about the introduction to related magazines, books and publications, 7 about terminology studies, 10 about the history of interpreting, 37 about interpreting training, and 21 about interpreting in different fields, among which 1 is about the field of law, 1 about information, 2 about science and technology, 7 about medical, 3 about auditory and visual interpreting, 1 about sociality, and 3 about conference. However, none is about diplomacy. While writing this paper,

the author googled “diplomatic interpreting” and found only 127 results matched results and the result of google book search (<http://books.google.com/>) was 5, which meant there were only 5 books discussing DI. The author also searched other online resources like National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and Wanfang Data (Info Site) (万方数据资源系统), making “外交口译” (“diplomatic interpreting”) the search word, and the result was surprising. Out of 17693112 papers published in Chinese magazines, only four papers are related to this subject. And out of 309938 excellent graduate dissertations written by postgraduates in China, only one result is related. The search result of Wanfang is also disappointing, with only one dissertation available.

It can be concluded that, in comparison with other areas of interpreting, DI has been a more or less ignored subject by researchers and theorists. Lack of research on DI does not mean DI is not worth looking into. On the contrary, studying on DI is quite necessary and valuable, though it probably constitutes a difficult task. It would be good for a nation’s diplomacy and also the cultivation of diplomatic interpreters who are badly needed in today’s world.

The world is becoming a global village, and China is playing a more active role in the international arena. As a result, more and more exchanges and cooperation are taking place in the new China which has scored huge success in its diplomacy. Not only Chinese, but also people from outside are keenly watching what China is and will be doing in the foreseeable future.

Research and analysis on interpreting for Chinese diplomacy would be of interest to many people. Therefore, I’d like to give a try in gathering related information and analyzing the status quo of Chinese diplomatic interpreting. Hopefully, this could be something useful for people interested.

2. Why do I choose this title?

Actually, the title of “Aspects of Chinese Diplomatic Interpreting” is ambiguous in that it could be both interpreted as DI in China and DI with Chinese. The former refers to DI only within the border of China, which is not what I mean to discuss. The latter can be interpreted as interpreting for Chinese diplomacy, which means that DI happening not only within China’s border but also outside China is to be included in my paper, as long as Chinese language is involved, such as when Chinese delegation attends UN conferences. Therefore, what I am going to discuss is DI with Chinese. But

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